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# Waste Not

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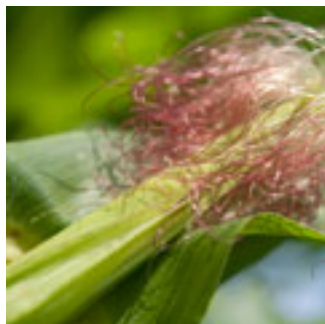
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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Waste Not

**07.30.2009 | Energy and Environment** With a conversion to compostable disposables and a contract with a regional processor of compostable waste, dining services hopes to compost or recycle up to 90 percent of its waste in the coming academic year.

It's the largest institutional food-scrap recycling effort in Ohio and one of the largest university food composting efforts in the nation, said Doug Alderman, director of agricultural and environmental business at Garick Corp., whose South Charleston, Ohio, plant will process the compost.

The program launches in mid-August, when dining rooms in Kennedy Union and the Marycrest and Virginia W. Kettering residence halls make a switch to packaging made from corn or sugar cane; students who choose to eat from disposable containers will pay an extra 25 cents for the packaging, while those who dine in will use china and dishwasher-safe plastic. Facilities without dish rooms will continue to offer carry-out packaging only and won't charge the extra fee for packaging, said Kathy Browning, budget director for dining services.

True, shipping the waste to South Charleston costs more than a trip to the county landfill, but the University has committed to being environmentally sustainable, and students support it, said Paula Smith, director of dining services.

"One of the most common complaints students have had with dining services for years is, 'Why all this Styrofoam?'" Smith said.

Food represents almost 16 percent of all municipal waste in the United States, Alderman said, citing studies by *Waste Age* magazine and the University of Arizona. Daily, that's about 1.3 pounds of discarded food per person — only 3 percent of which is recovered for reuse.

To make sure each type of waste ends up in its proper place, dining services is removing waste and recycling containers from the dining rooms and routing all dishes and disposables to the tray conveyors, said Jim Froehlich, who manages dining services' systems and marketing. Staff, who will receive training from Garick in August, will separate the trash, recycling, compostable material and china in the kitchen. Cooks also will be trained on how to route meat scraps, produce trimmings and other food waste to the appropriate containers.

Once it arrives at Garick, UD's compostable waste will be composted and cured for several months before being made into Garick's Paygro mulch, soil, potting mix and other products, which are marketed through retailers, garden centers and nurseries throughout the eastern and central United States.

Froehlich said he's confident UD can reach the 90-percent goal within two years, though it will take a lot of communication, participation and training.

"We arrived at that number because of a one-month waste audit last year in Marycrest," he said. "After all the trash was collected and separated, 60 percent of it was compostable, and 30 percent was recyclable. We can do it."

Once the program is working optimally, UD could be considered a sustainability leader among institutional dining operations of UD's size. Others include Ohio University, already considered a green leader because of its onsite composting program. Though OU hasn't yet converted to compostable carry-out containers in all of its dining facilities, it's moving in that direction, Browning said. Ohio State University is looking into a conversion to compostable containers at Ohio Stadium, Froehlich said, and Emory University uses Orca Green, a biocomposting reactor in which microorganisms aerobically break down up to 1,600 pounds of organic waste per day into "gray water."

Some factors have worked in UD's favor, namely the ability of local supplier ISupply Co. to source, order and inventory the packaging with the assistance of Green Nature Marketing, another local venture. The proximity of the Garick facility doesn't hurt, either.

"It's challenging to find an Ohio EPA-approved Class II composting facility to accept food waste," Browning said. "There aren't that many around, so we're really lucky that Garick is so close. If it weren't, it wouldn't have made sense to convert to compostable materials because they don't degrade in a landfill."

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